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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001293

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/14/2015

TAGS: PGOV PREL NP GON

SUBJECT: NEPAL: KING TO QATAR, SON PARAS TEMPORARILY IN CHARGE

REF: KATHMANDU 00638

Classified By: Charge Elisabeth Millard. Reason 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (U) His Majesty King Gyanendra and his wife departed Nepal for Doha, Qatar on June 13 to participate in the Second Summit Conference of the Developing Countries. Their Majesties travel to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on June 18 before returning to Nepal on June 22. As he did last time he left the country in April to attend the African-Asian Summit in Indonesia, the King constituted a Council of Royal Representatives under the chairmanship of Crown Prince Paras to discharge duties during his father's absence.

¶2. (C) The King plans to address the Second Summit Conference of the Developing Countries on its opening day, June 15. In a national address in Nepal on June 12, the King said the Group of 77 and China, participants in the Qatar conference, provided a collective voice and common platform for developing nations. The King is not expected to have any sidebar meetings with Indian officials as only the Minister of State for External Affairs is scheduled to attend the Doha meeting according to Nischal Pandey, son of current Minister of Foreign Affairs and close Embassy contact. Pandey said the King would grant an audience to the Bangladeshi Prime Minister. In UAE, the King was to meet with Prince Al-Thani.

¶3. (U) The King's trip also coincides with a tourism and trade fair; the King planned to inaugurate the first ever "Promote Nepal 2005" trade fair in Doha, Qatar on June 14. Nepalese workers in Doha are scheduled to host a civic reception in honor of the King on June 14. More Nepalis work in Qatar than any country other than Saudi Arabia; in March Foreign Minister Pandey signed Nepal's first labor agreement with Qatar to safeguard the interests of the approximately 95,000 Nepalis working there(Reftel). Valid for four years, the accord guarantees Nepali laborers their contractual salary and other benefits.

¶4. (C) Nischal Pandey told EmbOff that Qatar would give His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN), rather than an employment agency, a quota for additional Nepalese workers. HMGN was considering using this quota to attract Maoist rebels to give up arms and obtain an overseas job in Qatar, where the average salary was 2000USD per month.

¶5. (C) Comment: The departure of the King signals his confidence in the current security situation in Nepal.

MILLARD